

February 25, 2019

Testimony regarding HB5902 AN ACT CONCERNING NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

I am Sandra Carbonari, a primary care pediatrician and the medical director of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am testifying on behalf of the nearly 1000 pediatrician members against HB5902 AN ACT CONCERNING NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advocates that every child receive high-quality, accessible, family-centered, continuous, coordinated, comprehensive care in a medical home. To this end, optimal pediatric care is best delivered in a team-based approach that is led by a primary physician, ideally a pediatrician, who assumes responsibility for managing the patient's care. All professionals who provide pediatric care must hold to the highest standards of education and training and continually demonstrate their skills and competencies.

We have grave concerns related to naturopaths having the ability to prescribe, dispense or administer prescription drugs given that they generally believe that only natural substances are necessary.

Naturopathy is guided by a philosophy that emphasizes the healing power of nature. Naturopaths use both traditional and modern therapies (approaches they consider to be the most natural and least invasive) and view their role as supporting the body's inherent ability to maintain and restore health. Naturopathic medicine combines many methodologies, such as acupuncture, massage, chiropractic adjustment, homeopathy and herbal cures, along with sensible concepts such as good nutrition, exercise and relaxation techniques. There is currently little evidence on the use of naturopathy in medical conditions in children.

During the 4 years of medical school, Medical Pharmacology is first approached as a basic biomedical science and later focuses on therapeutics and clinical applications. The study of pharmacology continues during postgraduate training, i.e. residency, which is at least 3 years long. During that time we focus specifically on the unique needs and differences of prescribing medications to children from birth through adulthood.

A license to practice Naturopathy requires 4 years of study at a naturopathic school. A typical curriculum in Naturopathic training has a total of 4 credits of pharmacology in a 300-credit program. There is no requirement for postgraduate training. We do not think that this is adequate preparation for prescribing medications to children.

Our other major concern is the traditional anti vaccination views prevalent in naturopathy. Immunizations are one of the most important pharmacological substances we have in our mission to prevent disease and keep children healthy. We strongly believe in the importance and life saving need to vaccinate children and young adults against preventable diseases. We believe that naturopaths do not.

We believe that there is value in nontraditional therapies such as acupuncture and massage, and certainly share in the philosophy of the importance of prevention as well as good nutrition. However, practitioners of Naturopathy are not adequately trained to prescribe medications, especially to children.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.